



**Love and Affection Transcend all Barriers of Kinship in Ruskin
Bond's *The Woman on Platform 8***

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Introduction

Ruskin Bond is famous Indian short story writer of British descent. Bond is basically a novelist and also poet and he is the favourite writer of Indian children. His short stories have occupied in the school, college and university syllabus by Indian government. He is very talented writer in his teen age by publishing the novel *Room on the Roof*. In 1957 he received John Rhys Memorial Award for the novel and acclaimed a name around the Indian readers. He has pictured the life of children and simple folk life of Uttarakhand. He is very simple and lucid writer presenting his language very easily understanding by the readers. He has portrayed his short stories by viewing the ecosystem life of people in a unique manner. He received Sahitya Akademi award for his immense contribution as a writer to the Indian literature.

he is distinguished by the Indian government by offering two elite awards Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014. He seems an icon of the writer for children. He focused children literature and created hundreds of short stories to present immense message to teens.

The Patience of a School Boy

Not like other short stories of Ruskin Bond, this story is written with unique narrative structure. He has divided the story into two sections 'Section I' and 'Section II'. He has jumped away from his usual narrative structure of using his conventional title making. In this story he has mentioned the number eight directly as platform '8'. The story is first person narration in 'I' narrative structure, here the protagonist of the story is Arun. The artistic story begins gently with the description of the boy's streaming mind full of thinking: "It was my second year at boarding school, and I was sitting on platform no. 8 at Ambala station waiting for the northern bound train." It is not a craving for the school, but a longing for the kindness of parents. Generally, most of the school students do not show interest in the study. Most of the students would avoid going for the school, but they try to be with parents to have their kindness fully. As being twelve years, old boy has come alone to the station alone by bus. He has a merciful heart which shows a true kindness on the stray dogs by giving broken biscuits while waiting for the train: "...or feeding broken biscuits to stray dogs." He declares the peace atmosphere around the station is pleasant for waiting in the platform. But if a train arrives, the floating of people making crowd that seems like hell through vendors shouting, howling, making noise in the busy platform makes him to feel an irritation. But patiently he is wandering here and there and going up and down and looking books in the platform books stall. After all the things have been through, the boy comes to his place to wait patiently.

The Love and Affection of the Woman

Arun is somewhat tolerating to wait for the train would come in the midnight. He is watching the people and vendor at the station, at the time, he hears a voice of woman genuinely asking by: "Are you all alone, my son?" She seems just lean body structure along with a pale face "and kind eyes" dressed very simply unless any jewels over her. The boy has identified that she is very poor. He trusted her even she is a stanger at the station for "simplicity of her dress and for her deep soft voice and the serenity of her face." There after the boys says his name is Arun to the woman. The woman calls him to eat something in the place. The fear and suspect try to neglect her call, but her true kindness gives much strength to his mind to cooperate with her. Both go down for having some food from the railway station dining room: "She took me into the dining-room, ordered tea and samosa and jalebies, and at once I began to thaw and take a new interest in this kind woman." While the boy is eating patiently the food, she watched very happily by showing her real kindness over him. The real kindness expressed by each other by sharing their present situation: "But she did not ask me about my family or where I lived, and I did not ask her where she lived. I accepted her for what she had been to me- a quite, kind and gentlewoman who gave sweets to a lonely boy on a railway platform." The offered food by the woman made a strong connection between them very closely. She did not ask anything about the boy's family and his personal things. Her real kindness is non-expectation of anything from him and one shall not measure her real love and care on him though being a stranger. After these events, Arun encounters his class mate boy Satish appearing with his mother. Satish introduces Arun to his mother that he is the best cricket bowler in the school. Satish mother now enquires about the woman to Arun who endeavours to tell something about the woman, suddenly she introduces herself that: "I opened my mouth to make some explanation, but before I could say anything the woman replied: 'Yes I am Arun's mother'" But Satish's mother warned the two

boys to be very careful from strangers of the railway station in the midnight. She worries about the situation and the conditions of the young boys are innocents that they would be cheated by the strangers: “Satish’s mother said: It’s such a nuisance having to wait for the train right in the middle of the night. But one can’t let the child wait here alone. Anything can happen to a boy at a big station like this, there are so many suspicious characters hanging about.” Suddenly the woman delivered the words that Arun can travel alone in the train before her. These hopeful words admired Arun and loyally watching her face.

Motherly Love and Affection

Mother shows true love and mother is the justice who forgives all the mistakes of human errors. Here the author compares the two women’s love on the two boys. Satish’s mother “definitely staggered a little, as obviously she was not used to being contradicted by small boys. Arun notices the rough handling of words of Satish’s mother for not trusting the strangers and beware of them: “There you are, you see if you don’t watch over them all the time, they’ll walk straight into trouble. Always listen to what your mother tell you, she said wagging a fat little finger at me. And never, never talk to stranger.” But the newly befriended woman never shouts anything before the boys and her eyes showing true love over them. For all the warning by Satish’s mother is for true care over his son, but her severe control and behavior is not fine at the moment. Satish just grins towards Arun by neglecting his mother’s words. Meanwhile the train arrives there and the two boys get into the train and placed on the seats near the windows. The two women, Satish’s mother and stranger woman stand beside them. When the boys placed themselves at the open windows, the two women are talking up to them and “Sathish mother did most of the talking.” She said: “No don’t jump on and off moving trains, as you did just now, she said. And don’t stick your hands out of the windows, and don’t eat any rubbish on the way.” But the boy Arun noticed the real kindness of the mysterious woman in her eyes which glitter with

love: “I looked straight into the eyes of the woman who held my hand, and she smiled in a gentle punderstanding way. I leaned out the window then, and put my lips to her cheek, and kissed her.” While Satish’s mother talking with the woman, she did not get any attention over the words, instead of that she gives much attention to the boy with her real kindness. She longingly watches him and feels anxiety for leaving him. “Satish’s mother was talking to her, but she didn’t appear to be listening. She was looking at me, as the train took me away.” She is described as a “sweet woman in white” and the boy watched her still she vanishes away from the eye sight of the school boy Arun. Thus the author vividly has pictured the kindness of a mysterious woman in the platform eight.

Conclusion

The story warns all the readers that people shall not accept any eatable things in the railway station from the strangers and never talk to them. But the writer Ruskin Bond confuses the readers by narrating a boys’ situation to accept eatable things from a woman the stranger and freely talking with her. The story aims to project the advice for the children how to behave with a mysterious fellows. By talking and eating strangers’ food, many passengers have lost their jewels, moving properties and life. At the end of the story, readers justify the act of woman is great but not acceptable one. In the present life, some women are living with love and affection minded is wonder. Thus Bond has portrayed the theme love and affection which transcend all barriers of kinship.

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